

**DESIGNING WOMEN: ARISTOPHANES’  
LYSISTRATA AND THE “HETAIRIZATION”  
OF THE GREEK WIFE\***

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**INTRODUCTION**

Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* is a comedy of political and sexual negotiation and of what happens when complementary but distinct spheres of social interaction—the polis and the oikos, the public and the private—are torn apart and turned inside-out by protracted and seemingly ineluctable warfare. Produced, most probably, at the Lenaia of 411,<sup>1</sup> this unusually topical drama offers an alluring reversal of the more standard comic representation of female sexuality as implicitly destructive to the civic body, forging in its place a fantasy world in which strictly proscribed sexual negotiation might

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1 A secure dating for this drama is difficult. As Henderson 1987.xv–xviii argues, however, the internal evidence of the play—the attitudes, assumptions, and arguments of the characters—in addition to the evidence given in the eighth book of Thucydides (though admittedly problematic in chronology at some places) will support a date of 411. For fuller discussions of dating, see Sommerstein 1977 and Westlake 1980. Unless otherwise noted, I have followed the text of the *Lysistrata* in Henderson 1987. All translations are my own.

function as a politically ameliorative force. The comedy opens with the novel and distinctly “domestic” observation that the war between Athens and Sparta has left women throughout Hellas abandoned at home and sexually neglected. The Athenian protagonist *Lysistrata*<sup>2</sup> sets out to seal a reconciliation between the opposing sides: drawing her pan-Hellenic sisters out from their *oikoi*, she recasts the war in terms of an unfair attack on the civic and sexual rights of the women of Hellas, and finally rallies a corporate counterassault against the warring men. The assault will consist of a doubled appropriation of goods normally controlled by the citizen male: sex and civic wealth. On the one hand, the young and hypersexualized wives of Athens are to refrain from all physical relations with their husbands until reconciliation is achieved. In a complementary strike, the post-reproductive crones (*πρεσβυτάται*, 177<sup>3</sup>), whose bodies and sexuality have no value, “occupy” the Akropolis and, more importantly, its treasuries. Only when the Athenians and Spartans are reconciled—only when the city at war has been transformed into the city at peace—will the men regain sexual control over their wives and economic control over their polis.

Some earlier scholars argue that the *Lysistrata* can be read as a kind of proto-feminist utopia in which the fantasy of a feminine/sexualized end to war is fantastic but “nevertheless realizable in principle.”<sup>4</sup> As J. Vaio notes (1973), the female resistance around which the dramatic action is forged is expressed as a comic commingling of normally, if nominally, distinct spheres of civic negotiation. The social, political, and economic equilibrium of the

2 On the name of *Lysistrata* and other *nomi parlanti* in this comedy, see Funaioli 1984–85; for speculations on the identity of a certain *Lysimache* linked to the cult of Athena on the Akropolis, see Lewis 1955 and Henderson 1987.xxxvii–xxxix.

3 ταῖς πρεσβυτάταις γὰρ προστέτακται τοῦτο δρᾶν at 177. Here *Lysistrata* first introduces the distinction in duties between the sexually active wives and the post-reproductive matrons of the city. The aged women give voice to complaints economized not in the terms of a sexual deficit, but rather those of the social and civic losses of protracted battle. They charge that, in the death of their sons, the war is wasting the “monetary contributions” (cf. 651, τοῦράνου γὰρ μοι μέτεστι) that they, as mothers, have paid into the city. On this, see further Foley 1982.6, who rightly suggests we might read ἔρανος as “tax” in this passage. Henderson 1987.157 ad 651 cites also Thukydides 2.43.1 and Lykourgos *Leokr.* 143 for the use of this word in the assimilation of public and private activity.

4 Henderson 1987.xxxii. I would disagree with Henderson’s claim that, “The women of the play neither alter their characteristic situations nor adopt uncharacteristic ones,” for their very entry onto the streets of the city and the concomitant commoditization of their progeny or sexuality marks a strong departure from the normative characterizations of female activity. For general discussions of Aristophanic “utopia,” see Ehrenberg 1943.47, Schwinge 1977, and Zimmerman 1983.

polis has been degraded by the prolonged stresses caused by the Peloponnesian war, and the drama presents a city whose normative ideological boundaries—the means by which conceptual and structural distinctions are made between “interior” and “exterior,” “Athenian” and “foreigner,” “private” and “public,” and (as I will argue) “wife” and “non-wife”—are unable to withstand the protracted assault on its resources. More recently, critics have suggested that the eventual success of this feminine—and here I emphasize *not* feminist<sup>5</sup>—uprising is to be credited almost exclusively not to the wives’ withholding of sex, but rather to the primarily extra-sexual negotiations of *Lysistrata* and the Choros Gunaikôn.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, whereas the conjugal strike seems at first blush to be the focal point of the drama—it is with this theme that the play gets underway, and the broad humor of the so-called “sex strike” occupies the whole of the prologue (1–253) and continues until the entry of the Choros Gunaikôn in the parodos at 254—the major agonistic and dramatic force of the play resides in the extra-sexual negotiations of the mature Athenian women.<sup>7</sup>

But even if the occupation-assault would appear to carry the weight of the negotiations (and I am not sure that it does), *Lysistrata* presents a polis that has found its private and domestic activity penetrated and inverted by exterior martial strife. The Athens of this stage is a city turned on its head: all rules of behavior and expectations have been destabilized, and the ominous (if undeniably comic) results of this inversion will not allow the sex strike to be dismissed as nothing more than lusty buffoonery.<sup>8</sup> We must turn a sharper and more visually informed eye to the comic representation of the sex strike:

5 The projection of modern ideologies of sexuality and gender onto texts of the classical period runs the risk of being stoutly misguided, if not merely pointless. See, however, Rosellini 1979 for a discussion of the ways in which *Lysistrata* does work to present a distinctly “feminine” approach to the resolution of war.

6 This motif provides the action of almost one-third of the play, 254–705; see, most recently, Faraone 1997.39. Henderson 1987.xxvi notes that the agonistic action of the drama leaves the young wives virtually untouched.

7 Hulton 1972.34 notes that “Plan A” (the sex strike) and “Plan B” (the occupation of the Akropolis) are only tenuously connected in terms of causality: “Though largely separate, the two plans do, at certain points, become paradoxically mixed . . . Both in the ‘escaping women’ and in the subsequent Myrrhina-Cinesias passage, it almost seems that Plan B is simply a means of achieving Plan A—though this is not how either plan was originally envisaged.” Faraone 1997 remarks on the two “very different” types of women represented and notes that, in the end, it is the occupation that “gets the job done.”

8 As Henry 1995.21 notes of the representation of women in positions of power: “According to [Old Comedy’s critique of women vis-à-vis political power], women could not govern the polis; their attempts to do so, especially as would be seen in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*

why was it included, how was it structured, and what does it say about the difficulties of portraying Athenian wives on the comic stage in what is quite likely the first effort to do so?<sup>9</sup>

### I. DESIGNING WOMEN: THE PROBLEM WITH THE “SEX-TRADING” COMIC WIFE

In the socially and sexually reductive ideology of the late fifth century, the artistic representation of women in public was fraught with subversive connotations. A woman acting outside of the confines of normal domestic activity (as defined by, but not limited to, the physical *oikos* itself) was, by definition, a woman displaced in terms of her civic or sexual identity and thus indicative of a fault line in male activity.<sup>10</sup> The plot of *Lysistrata* requires that the private negotiations of the marriage bed be displaced onto—and made public on—the comic stage. But this displacement was not without its difficulties. For as fraught as is any investigation into the representation of female sexuality in the drama of classical Athens, the public display of female sexuality is incompatible with the social category of “wife” in Attic drama.<sup>11</sup> Although it is reasonable to suppose that the poet’s

and *Ecclesiazusae*, must always be considered an inversion and mockery of the norm; the possibility of their doing so, even when represented as fantasy, indicates a severe crisis in the polis.”

- 9 Although it seems that Pherekrates developed a whole array of female characters in the 430s, wives are not securely attested as active forces on the comic stage before the production of *Lysistrata*. Henderson 1998 notes that women first appear in Aristophanes in the 420s, but “they are always public types like market-women, innkeepers, or the wives and mothers of ‘demagogues.’” Sympathetic heroines appear only in the *Lys.* of 411 and *Ekk.* ca. 392; on the representation of the gynaiocratic “utopia” of the *Ekk.*, see Zeitlin 1999.
- 10 By way of helpful parallel, Cooper 1992.155 notes in a discussion of “womanly influence” in the Christianization of the Roman aristocracy: “Where women . . . are discussed, their appearance should be read as a sign that a man’s character is in question.” For a general discussion of the women of *Lysistrata* (with particular emphasis on staging), see Taaffe 1993.48–73.
- 11 The somewhat problematic category of the “wife” in Greek tragedy has been the subject of numerous recent studies (so see Rabinowitz 1993, Wohl 1998, and, most recently, Foley 2002). The “wife” in comedy has attracted far less attention (as she is far less present), but Levine 1987 provides a convincing analysis of the similarities between the representation of the wives in Euripides’ *Bakkhai* and the women of *Lysistrata*, and suggests that the two dramas share the theme of a sexual role reversal in which “wine inspired” women rebel against their civic authorities for the overall good of the state. On this, see Henderson 1987.136 ad 529.

audience would have accepted that wives might trade sexual access in return for domestic protection or private favors from their husbands, in the late fifth century, there was not yet any precedent for the representation of such negotiations on the comic stage. Domestic sexual negotiation, like much domestic activity as a whole, was a hidden affair: the representation of a “wife” as a sexual negotiator—whether that representation is figurative or poetic—results in a necessary destabilization or displacement of her “domestic” identity. For a wife to be represented trading in her sexuality meant for the fifth-century audience of comedy that she is no longer, for all intents and purposes, a wife. In the representational mind of the audience, she becomes another type of woman altogether. It is the argument of the following pages that, in *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes capitalizes on this comic “de-wifing”—implicit in the representation of female sexual negotiation—in terms of vivid sympotic imagery and sexual innuendo, to a pointed dramatic end. The young wives of *Lysistrata* who transfer their domestic “business” from the privacy of the *oikos* to the publicity of the Akropolis<sup>12</sup> (or rather, the comic stage) are comically “hetairized”—recreated as pseudo-*hetairai*—to double effect. First, the transformation of proper wives (a rare breed in comedy at any rate, and not attested on the stage before *Lysistrata*) into properly comic—and dramatically more fungible—*hetairai* underlines in its bawdy innocence the shaky discursive antithesis of wife vs. *hetaira*.<sup>13</sup> Second, and by extension, the representation of Athenian wives as Athenian *hetairai* morphs the comedy as a whole into a fantastic, political *Hetärensymposion*.<sup>14</sup> It is a topsy-turvy world in which sympotic activity not only

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12 See Loraux 1993.147–98 for a wide-ranging discussion of the political and sexual connotations of the wives’ withdrawal from the domestic realm and their occupation of the Akropolis.

13 On the *hetaira* “housewife” antithesis in monumental and fictive art, see Keuls 1983 and 1985.215–24. For an analysis of the fine line between courtesan and wife in Menander’s *Perikeiromene*, see Konstan 1987. Zwieg 1992.77 notes that, in the case of Aristophanic comedy, “The spillover in attitude from *hetairai* to wives is significant,” but limits her examples to *Pax* and *Aves*.

14 The term *Hetärensymposion* is used by Peschel 1987 to describe the *hetaira*-only drinking party as it appears on a group of late sixth- and early fifth-century vases. Although I will argue in this paper that Aristophanes produces intentional echoes of the sympotic imagery of fifth-century red-figure vessels, I use the term here only in reference to the poet’s own fantasy of the “all *hetaira*” party on a vast urban scale and not to this body of visual evidence itself. Both Peschel 1987 and Reinsberg 1989 (see, esp., 112–14) suggest that the scenes of these *hetaira*-symposion vases are meant to represent real or, at least, plausible

mimes, but, in a sense, actually becomes the civic, and a world in which a democratic peace can mean only the ultimate return of the wife to the confines of the private home.

And yet if the sex-trading wives of *Lysistrata* might be viewed profitably as pseudo-*hetairai*, we need to establish why they might not be as profitably imagined as seductively tuneful *aulêtrides* or alluringly indiscriminate *pornai*. In other words, why *hetairai*? Let us first set the extent and scope of this discursive category as it is used in this study. It is worth noting that neither the word *hetaira*, nor indeed the word for any other “formally recognized” sex worker (*pornê*, *aulêtris*) appears in this comedy.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, although the *aulêtris* Dardanis plays a minimal part in *Wasps* and two unnamed *orchêstrides* come to the stage in *Knights*, it is wholly unclear whether any woman who could be categorized as a “real” *hetaira*—although this category of representation would become hugely important for the writers of New Comedy—can be identified in any of Aristophanes’ works.<sup>16</sup> But the argument for “hetairization” of the wives is one of representation rather than realization: in my description of the wives as *hetairai*, I mean to distinguish the representations of these women as “non-wives” from the various other economically and socially fraught categories of the “non-wife” to which the comic poet might have had recourse. The women of

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situations and persons. In general, however, I follow Csapo and Miller 1991.380 (see also Kurke 1997.135, Goldhill 1992.197), who suggest that we should read the visual representations of the *Hetärensymposion* not as any attempt to echo a practical reality, but rather as “an erotic daydream . . . a symposion joke for the symposion.”

15 However, cf. Kurke 1997.113: “The presentation of the *hetaira* is delicate and indirect: indeed, so indirect that we need some ingenuity in locating the *hetaira* in Greek verse.” In a sense, then, although the category of the *hetaira* was recognizable from at least the sixth century on, the naming of a woman as a *hetaira* was relatively rare and appears reserved as a form of derision. Thus Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.11.1) advances the concubine Theodote as an important character in his *Memorabilia*, but avoids use of the term *hetaira*. Kurke notes of this passage that: “Those aristocratic sources well disposed to the institution never use the term *hetaira*, preferring polite periphrases” (1997.113). So we see that, in the invective against Neaira ([ps.-Dem.] 59), the woman’s career as a *hetaira* is hyperbolically emphasized for the purpose of attacking Stephanos (on which see further Gilhuly’s excellent study on this theme, 1999.27–56).

16 It is outside the scope of this study to consider the ideological shift between Old Comedy and New Comedy through which the *hetaira* became a preeminent character in the representation of the household. For thorough-going examinations of the *hetaira* or courtesan in Greek Old and (especially) New Comedy, see, in particular, Anderson 1984, Brown 1990 and 1993, Hauschild 1993, Henry 1985 and 1986.147, and Konstan 1987.

*Lysistrata* are not playing the part of wives; nor, it is important to emphasize, are they playing the part of two-bit hookers.<sup>17</sup>

Within the ideological scope of the “non-wife,” the category of *hetaira* existed at the elite end of a sexual and economic continuum that extended down through the categories *aulêtris* and *orchêstris* and bottomed out, in terms of a linguistic mapping of social and economic availability, with the *pornê*. Although the lines of demarcation along this continuum were surely never fixed, the best of recent studies have shown that, at least through the middle of the fourth century, the distinction between *hetaira* and *aulêtris* or *pornê* relied to a large extent on the economic “token” for which sexual companionship was to be traded. Thus the *pornê* was imagined to be something of a “pure commodity” up for hire in exchange for raw cash and without much autonomy over her own sexual person; the commissioning of an *aulêtris*, if nominally predicated on a musical “product,” was expected to include access to sexual favors as well.<sup>18</sup> The *hetaira*, by contrast, was figured as an “un-purchasable,” singularized good: a woman to whom access was neither immediate nor expected, with whom one engaged ideally in a long-term relationship of elite gift giving and the exchange of “favors,”<sup>19</sup> and who retained for herself a sense of control and autonomy (sometimes, as *Lysistrata* might suggest, at the expense of her partner’s). Particularly helpful in this conceptualization is Leslie Kurke’s thorough-going work (1997) on the discursive category of the *hetaira* in the visual and poetic

17 The topic of Athenian prostitution in its many forms has received abundant scholarly attention in recent years. *Pace* Keuls 1985, esp. 204–88, who would hold that there are only “Two Kinds of Women”—the wife and the prostitute—identifiable in the sexual dynamics of classical Athens, the massively polyvalent category of the Athenian “non-wife” is a continuing focus of investigations into the intersections of gender, power, and politics in the classical period. Although it goes beyond the scope and intention of this study to argue anew for the distinctions between “non-wife” categories as they function in Aristophanes (much less Athenian ideology of the late fifth century), we will find particularly useful the fifth-century ideological construction of the *hetaira*—as distinct from that of other types of “non-wives”—in our conceptualization of the question at hand.

18 On the continuum of *hetaira-aulêtris-pornê*, see Davidson 1998, esp. 73–136. At p. 81, Davidson remarks: “Along with other music-girls the *aulêtrides* played an important role at the symposium, entertaining the guests with music at the beginning and with sex at the end of the party.” By the fourth century, Davidson notes, *aulêtris* had become a euphemism for “cheap prostitute” (82; see his note 27 for further bibliography and examples).

19 So Harvey 1988.249: “The word *hetaira*, ‘companion,’ was a euphemism for a woman with whom a man of the leisured classes maintained a fairly long-term sexual relationship, based on ‘gift-giving’ . . . whereas a *pornê* is a woman from whom any man might buy a single session on a purely commercial basis.”

evidence of the sixth and fifth centuries. Kurke's focus is on the "invention" of the *hetaira* (as opposed to, and distinct from, the *pornê*) in the archaic and early classical periods. But the discursive constructs of these early periods resound throughout the later classical period (at least), and Kurke's acute analysis of the categories of sexual negotiation—in which the *hetaira* is associated with precious metals and elite exchange and the *pornê* with base coinage and the "democratic" circulation of commodities—aligns itself well with the arguments I am advancing in this study vis-à-vis the "public" representation of normatively "private" sexual negotiations on the comic stage of the late fifth century. The wives of *Lysistrata*, it is clear, are not simply "up for sale" to the highest bidder; each wife "deals" only with her own long-term partner, and only for a specific, and specifically non-monetary, non-commoditized, goal. These are no mere *pornai* or *aulêtrides* trading sex for *drachmai* and circulating through the hands of men like so much common coinage. The women of *Lysistrata* come to the stage in a position of relative power and control; they come to trade their companionship not for money nor, strictly speaking, material favors, but for that most singular and golden of civic values, peace itself.<sup>20</sup>

But to the comic stage. The *hetaira* seems not to have been a distinctive element of Aristophanic comedy, though we cannot say for sure because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence. Pherekrates, however, had established the *hetaira* as a comic character type as early as the 420s, and the character of Aspasia, perhaps one of the most notable, if reviled, "non-wives" of fifth-century literary representation, might be said to have been somewhat "hetairized" in the numerous early comedies in which she figured.<sup>21</sup> By this time, the figure of the *hetaira* was in large part removed

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20 On the economic tensions implicit in the invention and activation of the discursive category of the *hetaira*, Kurke 1997.111 notes: "The category of the *hetaira* appears roughly contemporaneously with the adoption of coinage by Greek cities." On the close relationship between *hetairai* and symposia (to be discussed further below), Kurke cites Herter 1960.95–97, Brendel 1970.19, 29–36, Peschel 1987, Calame 1989.103–08, Reinsberg 1989.91–120.

21 On literary representations of Aspasia, see Henry 1995.19–28, who reviews the representations of Aspasia in Kratinos, Eupolis, Hermippos, and Aristophanes (where she is mentioned in the *Acharnians*). It is important to note, however, that whereas the Aspasia of comedy is almost without exception a negative figure, a "Helen redux" (p. 23; cf. also p. 25) charged with starting a war and playing the pimp, the wives of *Lysistrata* are predominately positive in their characterization and are responsible not for starting a war, but for ending one.



from the strictly aristocratic associations of the archaic and early classical periods, but it is clear that she remained a potential source of censure or ridicule for the men with whom she associated. On the comic stage, she provided a way to introduce pseudo-domestic sexual activity into the arena of boisterous public display and, as such, became in short order a particularly valuable type of character for the genres of both Old and, particularly, New Comedy. The bulk of this value lay in the fact that the (comic) *hetaira* is, at least in the fantasy of the stage, both civic and domestic: she belongs properly to no man's home but, potentially, to the home of any. For the purposes of the drama, the representation of a female character as a *hetaira* makes possible the humorous public depiction of private female activity: the lampooning of intimate sexuality in a manner that did not actually attack or threaten the integrity of the home. This is not to say that the *hetairai* of the comic stage are really just wives "done up" in, as it were, a French Maid's costume. The *hetairai* of Pherekrates are just that: *hetairai*. But they are *hetairai* precisely because the early stages of Old Comedy offer no way to conceive of sexual activity within the public sphere save through that of the prostitute-client relationship. Whether this relationship is marked as socially and economically "respectable" (thus the *hetaira*) or "base" (the *aulêtris* or *pornê*), the configuration of female sexuality as inherently negotiable, and so inherently meretricious, remained for some time the most effective means of bringing to the comic stage—of "publicizing"—the socially fraught character of female sexuality.

In the remainder of this study, then, I focus on three of the scenes in which Aristophanes promotes particularly compelling sexualized representations of Greek women. I read the first two of these scenes against a backdrop of the social and visual construction of the *hetaira* in the fifth century. I start by reading the women's "oath" at lines 194–237 as an *entrée* into the sympotic imagery of the drama, a transformation of comic wives into comic pseudo-*hetairai*. Next, I turn to the "close encounter" of Myrrhine and her husband Kinesias and suggest that this scene embodies the whole of the sex strike in its distinctly "hetairic" language and imagery. Finally, I analyze the introduction of Diallagê in the final scenes of the drama and suggest that only with the transfer of the "elite" hetairic imagery of the wives onto the "democratic"—and dividable—body of Diallagê is Aristophanes' fantasy symposion brought to an end and a state of marital normalcy returned to the polis.

## II. THE OATH

The first hetairic transformation occurs at lines 193–237. After a brief introduction in which the scene of wartime hardships and the wives' growing domestic frustrations is set, Lysistrata horrifies the young wives with her radical scheme for a sexual embargo. Although yet unconvinced of the wisdom, or even feasibility, of their leader's radical plan, the women are eventually seduced into agreement by means of an equally radical method of oath-taking with decidedly sympotic overtones (193–208):

- Κα. ἀλλὰ πῶς ὁμούμεθα  
 ἡμεῖς;  
 Λυ. ἐγὼ σοι νῆ Δί', ἦν βούληι, φράσω.  
 θεῖσαι μέλαιναν κύλικα μεγάλην ὑπτίαν,  
 μηλοσφαγοῦσαι Θάσιον οἴνου σταμνίον  
 ὁμόσωμεν εἰς τὴν κύλικα μὴ ἴπιχεῖν ὕδωρ.  
 Λα. φεῦ δᾶ, τὸν ὄρκον ἄφατον ὡς ἐπαινίω.  
 Λυ. φερέτω κύλικά τις ἔνδοθεν καὶ σταμνίον.  
 Μυ. ᾧ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὁ κεραμῶν ὅσος.  
 Κα. ταύτην μὲν ἄν τις εὐθύς ἠσθεῖη λαβών.  
 Λυ. καταθεῖσα ταύτην προσλαβοῦ μοι τοῦ κάπρου.  
 δέσποινα Πειθοῖ καὶ κύλιξ φιλοτησία,  
 τὰ σφάγια δέξαι ταῖς γυναιξίν εὐμενῆς.  
 Κα. εὐχρῶν γε θαῖμα κάποπτύζει καλῶς.  
 Λα. καὶ μὰν ποτόδδει γ' ἀδὺ ναι τὸν Κάστορα.  
 Μυ. ἔατε πρώτην μ', ᾧ γυναῖκες, ὁμνύναι.  
 Κα. μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐκ ἐάν γε μὴ λάχητις.

- Ka. Well, how *are* we to take  
 this oath?  
 Ly. I'll tell you, by God, if that's what you want:  
 we'll place a big, black *kylix*—belly up—and  
 sacrifice into it—a jugful of Thasian, and  
 swear a solemn oath—not to pour any water into the  
 cup!  
 La. Boy howdy!—what an oath . . . it's . . . it's . . . it's . . .  
 Ly. Someone—bring a *kylix* and a jug from inside . . .  
 My. Oh my dears—take a look at the size of that thing!

- Ka. Just laying your hands upon it'd give a girl pleasure.
- Ly. Back off!—and let's grab ahold of this boar. "Lady Persuasion and Kylix of Alliance, receive you graciously this sacrifice from these women!"
- Ka. Hmm. Nice healthy blood, that, and look how it spurts!
- La. By Castor, it sure do smell good, too!
- My. Hey, ladies—let me be the first to take the oath!
- Ka. No, by Aphrodite—not unless you draw the first lot!

A novel way to swear an oath, indeed, and one that plays off the comic stereotype of female bibulousness.<sup>22</sup> As quickly as the women agree to her proposal, *Lysistrata* assumes the role of female symposiarch. In a deft transition from sacrificial to sympotic imagery, the protagonist reveals that the women are to fix their newly formed alliance not by offering the traditional sacrifice of an animal, but rather by "sacrificing" a jug of wine into a *kylix* and subsequently drinking this "blood" of their victim (195). In *Lysistrata*'s conflation of the imagery of the blood sacrifice with that of the

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22 On which see further Henderson 1987.81–82 ad 113–14 (with numerous examples). Surely the stereotype is at work in Euripides' *Bakkhai* (see note 11 above), and continues as a characteristic of unguarded female behavior well into the Roman period (cf., e.g., Aulus Gellius *Noct. Att.* 10.23). The sacrifice that accompanies the oath at 188–93 is a reference to *Septem* 42ff. (on which see Foley 1982.18; Foley cites Dover 1972.198–201), and is meant to recall a similarly civil assault on a city that resulted from the collapse, and partial inversion, of the discursive boundaries whereby the spheres of *oikos* and *polis* are forged as related but ideologically distinct. In Aiskhylos's drama, the domestic sphere under attack is cast in terms of fraternal politics: the normative cohesion of the fraternal bond has been broken apart by the curse of the House of Laios, and the result is a schizophrenic *oikos* in which "insider" (Eteokles) and "outsider" (Poluneikes) are made to enact a city-wide display of aristocratic self-destruction. In *Lysistrata*, the focus is not a single elite *oikos*, but rather the whole of the pan-Hellenic community. And yet, just as in *Septem*, the strife of our comedy centers upon the collapse of the normative categories of *oikos* and *polis* (on which see Vaio 1973.372, Foley 1982.6–13, Henderson 1987.129). For when *Lysistrata* recasts the *polis* as an extended and corporate *oikos*, she suggests that it is a "home" the women might reasonably defend with the only weapon available them: their capacity as erotic objects who are newly able to assert control over the terms of their non-monetary exchange. On this passage as a whole, see further Henderson 1987.92 ad 188–89a. Hutchinson 1985 ad 42–56 notes the celebrity of this passage in antiquity.

peace libation, she thus initiates the wives into a female sympotic alliance. The formality of this alliance—for all their comic bibulousness, these are no mere tippler wives—is starkly underlined by Kalonike’s insistence on the traditionally sympotic drawing of lots (208) to decide the order in which the women will drink from the *kylix*.<sup>23</sup>

The choice of the *kylix* here is of particular importance, for it is the definitively sympotic drinking vessel, at least in terms of poetic and artistic representations, of the fifth century. There is only one problem. Married women did not participate in symposia, and they did not drink from *kylikes*. *Hetairai*, however, did; and, indeed, we have hundreds of red-figure representations of such drinking from the *kylix*—the symposion vessel par excellence by the mid fifth century—either in the context of a fantastic *Hetärensypomion* (so Basel Market 1977, in which a group of reclining and topless *hetairai* hold aloft *kylikes* and musical instruments) or in the company of their male companions at regular mixed parties.<sup>24</sup> In these representations, *hetairai* may be depicted drinking from *skyphoi*, *kylikes*, or both (so fig. 1, Basel Kä 415, a traditional mixed symposion in which all *hetairai* except one [on reverse side] drink from the *kylix*), but in no case have we an identifiable representation of a wife (a woman in a domestic or non-symposion setting) drinking from, or otherwise using, a *kylix*. If *kylix* “means” symposion, then so, too, does a woman represented in possession of a *kylix* “mean” *hetaira*. And thus if we read the request for a *kylix*, and not the domestic (or as Keuls would have it, “wifely”) *skyphos*,<sup>25</sup> through the visual lexicon of Attic red-figure vessels—an iconographic language with which a late fifth-

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23 Henderson 1987.95 ad 208: “[Kalonike] insists that proper symposiac etiquette be followed by the drawing of lots to determine the order of drinking, cf. *Pl.* 972: ἄλλ’ οὐ λαχοῦσ’ ἔπινες ἐν τῷ γράμματι.” Of the sharing of drink, Davidson 1998.59 notes that the rituals of shared drinking are “a conspicuous feature of the symposium . . . Aristophanes uses the symposium as a metaphor for community threatened by unwelcome outsiders, like War.”

24 Cf., e.g., Peschel 1987, Kurke 1997, and Csapo and Miller 1991. For *hetairai* and *skyphoi* (common especially in the earlier period), see, e.g., Leningrad 644 [St. 1670] and Munich 2421 [by Phinias]; for *hetairai* and *kylikes*, see Basel Market 1977, Munich 2636, Louvre G 114; for hetairic use of both vessels on one pot, see, in addition to figure 1, Hermitage 6.1650. What is important to note is that *in no case* is a wife depicted drinking from, or otherwise using, a *kylix*. For what seems an identifiable depiction of a wife with a drinking cup, see London 769, a *pyxis* from the circle of the Brygos Painter [ARV 410.63].

25 Keuls 1985.212: “The flat symposion cup (*kylix*) is not used by wives.” The visually unmarked drinking vessel for the “red-figure wife” was the *skyphos*.



Figure 1. Illustration by Alexander James Hollmann: (*Kylix*: exterior)  
Basel Kā 415.

century audience of comedy would have been reasonably acquainted<sup>26</sup>—then Aristophanes has made explicit in *Lysistrata*'s request the new, powerfully sexual (and consequently political) personae of her fellow “symposiasts.”

The wives' sexuality is further hetairized in the lengthy visual details of the long oath that follows (209–36):

- Λυ. λάζυσθε πάσαι τῆς κύλικος, ὦ Λαμπιτοί·  
λεγέτω δ' ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν μί' ἄπερ ἂν κάγῳ λέγω·  
ὑμεῖς δ' ἐπομείσθε τὰντα κάμπεδώσατε.  
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ' ἀνὴρ—  
Κα. οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ' ἀνὴρ—  
Λυ. ὅστις πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόσεισιν ἐστυκῶς, λέγε.

26 I do not propose a direct line of influence or causality between vase images and comic representation. Nevertheless, the close connection between Attic vase painting and the themes of Old Comedy has been well established, and I maintain that Aristophanes' vivid descriptions of the wives' erotic activity, in combination with language suggestive of the public sex trade, would have resonated with an audience even “functionally literate” in the dialect of red-figure iconography. On the connection between red-figure representations and comedy, see Harvey 1988.248.

- Κα. ὅστις πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόσεισιν ἐστυκῶς. παπαί,  
ὑπολύεταί μου τὰ γόνατ', ὦ Λυσιστράτη.
- Λυ. οἴκοι δ' ἀταυρώτη διάξω τὸν βίον—
- Κα. οἴκοι δ' ἀταυρώτη διάξω τὸν βίον—
- Λυ. κροκωτοφοροῦσα καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένη—
- Κα. κροκωτοφοροῦσα καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένη—
- Λυ. ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῆι μάλιστά μου·
- Κα. ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῆι μάλιστά μου·
- Λυ. κούδέποθ' ἐκοῦσα τάνδρι τῶμῳ πείσομαι.
- Κα. κούδέποθ' ἐκοῦσα τάνδρι τῶμῳ πείσομαι.
- Λυ. ἐὰν δέ μ' ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βίαι,—
- Κα. ἐὰν δέ μ' ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βίαι,—
- Λυ. κακῶς παρέξω κούχι προσκινήσομαι.
- Κα. κακῶς παρέξω κούχι προσκινήσομαι.
- Λυ. οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τῷ Περσικά.
- Κα. οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τῷ Περσικά.
- Λυ. οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν' ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.
- Κα. οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν' ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.
- Λυ. ταῦτ' ἐμπεδοῦσα μὲν πίοιμ' ἐντευθενί·
- Κα. ταῦτ' ἐμπεδοῦσα μὲν πίοιμ' ἐντευθενί·
- Λυ. εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ὕδατος ἐμπλήθ' ἢ κύλιξ.
- Κα. εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ὕδατος ἐμπλήθ' ἢ κύλιξ.
- Ly. Everyone take a hold of the *kylix*. Hey, Lampito!  
Now, one of you ladies—on behalf of all—  
repeat after me:  
then, the rest of you swear by the terms, and stick  
to them.  
There is no man, neither lover nor husband—
- Κα. There is no man, neither lover nor husband—
- Ly. Who shall approach me with a hard-on. Say it!
- Κα. Who shall approach me with a hard-on.  
*Ohmygod!*  
My knees are giving out on me, Lysistrata!
- Ly. At home, unmounted, shall I pass my time—
- Κα. At home, unmounted, shall I pass my time—
- Ly. in shimmery negligee, perfumed and powdered—
- Κα. in shimmery negligee, perfumed and powdered—
- Ly. So my man'll get *really* hot and bothered!

- Ka. So my man'll get *really* hot and bothered!
- Ly. Nor willingly shall I *ever* submit to my husband's advances,
- Ka. Nor willingly shall I *ever* submit to my husband's advances,
- Ly. but if he takes me by force, against my will,—
- Ka. but if he takes me by force, against my will,—
- Ly. I'll make it tough for him, and just lie there like a dead fish.
- Ka. I'll make it tough for him, and just lie there like a dead fish.
- Ly. I won't kick my "Persians" up to the ceiling.
- Ka. I won't kick my "Persians" up to the ceiling.
- Ly. I won't go on all fours, like the "lioness on the cheesegrater."
- Ka. I won't go on all fours, like the "lioness on the cheesegrater."
- Ly. And fulfilling these vows, let me drink from this cup:
- Ka. And fulfilling these vows, let me drink from this cup:
- Ly. but if I break them, let this cup be filled with water!
- Ka. but if I break them, let this cup be filled with water!

Although this scene surely plays off of the literary tradition of the sexually powerful and manipulative wife—Helen and Penelope in the *Odyssey*, Clytemnestra and Helen on the dramatic stage—the scheming negotiations foreshadowed in the words of this oath are founded on an uncharacteristically ameliorative, if not truly altruistic, goal.<sup>27</sup> The terms of the oath are

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27 Cooper 1992.153 notes of the rhetoric of womanly influence: "The rhetorical figure of womanly influence existed in a both negative and a positive version. The negative version styled woman as seductress, bent on tempting a man by private allurements to a betrayal of public duty. The positive version dwelt on a man's licit relationship with female family members, whose soothing charm would ideally restore him to order when he had strayed." In *Lysistrata*, the "negative" and "positive" versions are collapsed into a single vision of a public female seduction that might itself restore order to the polis and persuade the men to "hear the voice of reason."

at first expressed with some resolve: however, the list of what the women *won't do* turns finally (229–32) to a brief, yet visually emphatic—and as we are invited to imagine, comically pantomimed<sup>28</sup>—catalogue of ambitious sexual positions. At lines 227–28, the women swear that if they are taken by force they will never “willingly submit” (κοῦχὶ προσκινήσομαι) to their husband’s advances; they will neither raise their “Persians” to the ceiling (229–30) nor assume the position of the “lioness on the cheese-grater” (λέαιν’ ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος, 231–32).

Not even in the relatively conservative lexicon of fifth-century female sexuality is the elevation of one or both legs during intercourse indicative of sex for sale, but the dramatic or pictorial representation of this posture may be. Indeed, the phrase αἶρειν τὰ σκέλη, “to raise the legs,” refers often to the enthusiastic (and often comic) female preparation for, and participation in, sexual intercourse.<sup>29</sup> In his discussion of this passage, Jeffrey Henderson notes that Theophrastus (*Ch.* 28.3.3) calls a brothel οἰκία . . . τὰ σκέλη ἤρκυῖα, “the house of raised legs,”<sup>30</sup> and, indeed, the raised-leg posture is common in fifth-century depictions of the sexual activity of the *hetaira*. Thus a cup by the Triptolemos Painter (fig. 2, Tarquinia; ARV 376,94) offers a fairly affectionate scene between a thus postured *hetaira* and her companion, whereas a red-figure *askos* (fig. 3; Kerameikos Museum 1063) depicts on one of its visual hemispheres a similar sexual scenario in which the raising of the legs seems an intentional sign of the *hetaira*’s “acceptance” of her companion’s advances.<sup>31</sup> This is the place to note that, in the sympotic depictions with which we are concerned, in no case are

28 Indeed, the poet’s description of sexual activity from which the women will refrain smacks of nothing so much as the scene in Lester’s 1966 film version of Sondheim’s “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” in which Pseudolus (Zero Mostel) performs for Hysterium (Jack Gilford)—and us—a hilariously suggestive pantomime of the unseen (and unspecified) delights contained in Hysterium’s secret “pornographic vase collection.”

29 In addition to this passage in the *Lysistrata*, Henderson 1991.173 also cites in this context verses 797/799, *Ekk.* 265, *Av.* 1245, *Pax* 889, and *Eupolis* 47, 50, 77.4.

30 αὐται αἱ γυναῖκες ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ τοὺς παριόντας συναρπάζουσι, καὶ οἰκία τις αὐτὴ τὰ σκέλη ἤρκυῖα, *Theoph.* *Ch.* 28.3.3. Henderson 1987.96 ad 229 compares the Latin *pedem tollere*. According to Adams 1982.192–93, the phrase *pedes tollere* is a euphemism [= *futuo(r)*] signifying the position of the female during coitus. So note Cicero’s joke at *Ep. Att.* 2.1.5, and cf. Petronius 55.6, v. 11, *Mart.* 10.81.4, 11.71.8; cf. αἶρειν τὰ σκέλη (*Ar. Ekk.* 265, *Pax* 889) (all cited by Adams, s.v.).

31 See, too, the exterior of a cup by the Antiphon Painter (ARV 339,55) and one by Onesimos (Basel BS 440; ARV 326,86 *bis*) on which are depicted somewhat coarser scenes of *hetairai* (?) with legs raised.





Figure 2. Illustration by Alexander James Hollmann: (*Kylix*: tondo)  
Tarquinia, Triptolemus painter; ARV 376,94.

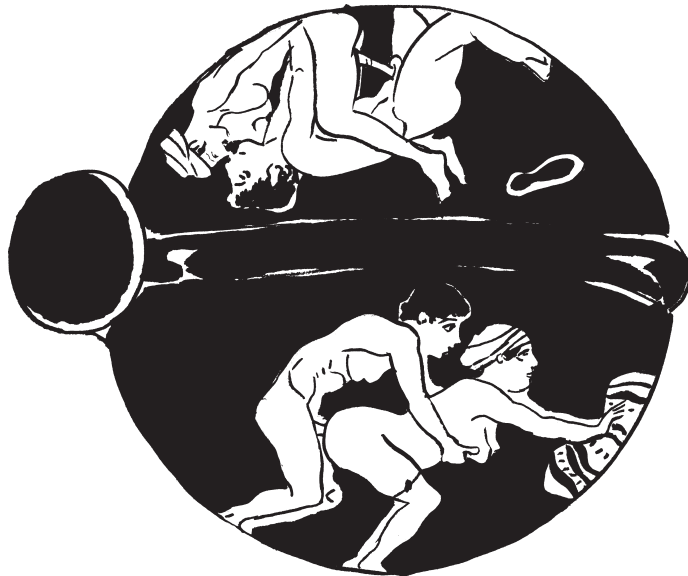


Figure 3. Illustration by Alexander James Hollmann: (*Askos*)  
Kerameikos Museum 1063.

*hetairai* depicted wearing footwear, Persian or otherwise. But if *hetairai* “did their business” barefooted, comic actors did not; and at least one image of a *hetaira* at her toilet (fig. 4, Berlin 3757; ARV 404,11) does indeed include a representation of “Persian slippers” in the background. In the poet’s pointed reference to “Persian slippers,” then, we might see both a subtle nod to Eastern luxury and its concomitant sexuality, traditionally associated with the symposium, and a clever means of working the costume of the comic stage into the action of the play itself.

As others have noted,<sup>32</sup> the “lioness on the cheesegrater” position must refer to dorsal sex. But the lioness was also one of the animals popularly associated with Attic *hetairai*,<sup>33</sup> and this sexual posture—perhaps, indeed, due to the compact nature of the “posture” itself—lends itself to the relatively cramped visual space allowed by the tondo ornamentation of sympotic vessels (fig. 5, a *kylix* by the Wedding Painter in a private collection in Munich; ARV 923,29). In fact, a survey of representations of intercourse on vases of the fifth century suggests that the posture required by dorsal sex seems among the most identifiably *hetairic*.<sup>34</sup> What, then, does it mean for an Athenian wife to be described—indeed, to be made to describe herself—in such overtly sexual terms?

In my reading of this passage, and indeed of this drama, it is precisely the language and imagery of this fantastic female “oath” by which the sexually viable women of the comedy are transformed from wives unsure themselves of how to “act” on the comic stage into *hetairai*, who are by 411 old hands at bawdy comic action. For even as the wives’ description of what they *will* do (sit chastely at home dressed to the nines) turns into a firm, and increasingly explicit, oath of what they *won’t* do (the “bump and

32 Cf. Henderson 1987.96 ad 231; for this description, Henderson cites further *Pax* 894–99 and the painted depiction on ARV 318,19. Henderson seems to take the reference to the “cheesegrater” literally, and notes, “Household utensils were often adorned with such animal motifs (B. Sparkes, *JHS* 82 (1962) 132), and a crouched posture would perhaps lessen the chance of breakage (so Σ).” Indeed, this is the suggestion made in Σ, but I wonder if the term—suggested in this passage to be somewhat idiomatic (cf. the coarse sexual idiom, “doggy style”)—might refer more generally to an identifiably feline raised-rump posture associated with hunting, claw-sharpening, and sexual availability.

33 Henderson 1987.96 ad 231 cites Bechtel, *Frauenamen* and Headlam/Knox at Herod. 2.73; see also Pape-Benseler s.v. Λέαινα, who note further that a certain Λέαινα was a *Geliebte des Harmodios* and suggest that the passage in question refers to her grave, *mit einer Löwen darauf*.

34 In addition to that cited above as figure 5, see London E44, ARV318–19, Oxford 1967.305 (by the Briseis Painter), a Tarquinia cup ARV 408,36, Florence 3912, and the red-figure *askos* cited above and illustrated in figure 3 (Kerameikos Museum 1063).



Figure 4. Illustration by Alexander James Hollmann: (*Kylix*: tondo) Berlin 3757; ARV 404,11.



Figure 5. Illustration by Alexander James Hollmann: (*Kylix*: tondo) Wedding painter, private collection, Munich; ARV 923,29.

grind,” raise their legs enthusiastically in the air, “take it” from behind), the audience is invited to imagine these wives in the very sexual positions that, in the fifth century, would have been incompatible with any public expression of the social category of wife but right in line with that of the sexually experienced *hetaira*. With no established way to depict the sexual negotiation of citizen wives on a comic stage, the poet turns to the established character type of the upper-class prostitute. And in a matter of some twenty-eight lines, Lysistrata has remade the “utterly debased”<sup>35</sup> wives of Greece into the astute negotiators of a markedly sexual and, at the same time, highly political, city-wide symposion.

### III. A FRUSTRATED TRANSACTION

This hetairization, introduced and adopted in the initiatory oath, is advanced, I argue, with the “close encounter” of Myrrhine and her husband Kinesias at 845 and following. Myrrhine had made her appearance on stage early in the drama (69); the first to arrive after Kalonike (whose arrival itself pointed to luxury clothing items of the sort associated with *hetairai*),<sup>36</sup> her initial encounter with Lysistrata perfectly encapsulated the image of

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35 Cf. Lysistrata’s exasperated complaint at 137: ὁ παγκατάπυγον θήμειτερον ἅπαν γένος. The prefix pan- on the double compound is for emphasis. The dual character of the (male) pathic behavior normally described by the term *καταπόγων* (“taking it up the ass,” i.e., playing the sexually and socially passive male) is here underlined by the poet’s unexpected twist of gendering: the women of Athens are not only sexually voracious (as implied in the prologue), but, in their indiscriminate voracity, they have descended to a state of complete social incompetence.

36 At 42–45, Kalonike questions the women’s ability to pull off Lysistrata’s plan, explaining that they would rather sit idly at home, perfumed (ἐξηνθισμέναι), clad in costly saffron gowns (κροκοτοφοροῦσαι), heavily made-up (κεκαλλωπισμέναι), wearing identifiably foreign Kimberic lingerie (Κιμβερικ’ ὀρθοστάδια) and exotic footwear (περιβαρίδας). The crocus-dyed garment, when worn by adult women, is one of the literary-visual markers of “working girls”; so, too, items of transparency (a likely reading of the Kimberic cloth; cf. Lysistrata’s reference to sheer “Amorgine slips” at 150–51) and those of elaborate or foreign luxury. On the clothing of the *hetaira* and the *pornē* in Greek texts, Dalby 2002 notes in conclusion: “In principle *hetairai* dress no differently from ‘respectable’ women except for more elaboration, more care to bring out the best . . . in their appearance” (121). On the likely foreign provenance of Kalonike’s footwear, see Henderson 1987.72 ad 45, who notes that the shoe “is perhaps connected [by name] with Egyptian βᾶρις (flat-bottomed boat).” An anonymous reader (who helpfully suggested that I pursue this point), has also offered the sharp observation that Kalonike’s image of the women sitting around at home might hint at a brothel setting.

Aristophanes' rapid, hypersexual wife. She has arrived late because she could scarcely find her girdle—an established symbol of sexuality and here of specifically feminine love of accoutrements<sup>37</sup>—in the early morning light (μόλις γὰρ ἠῦρον ἐν σκότῳ τὸ ζώνιον, 72); she comments appreciatively on the pubic coiffure of her Spartan colleague (νῆ Δί' ὡς Βοιωτία / καλὸν γ' ἔχουσα τὸ πεδίον, 87–88), she joins in the sexually frustrated complaints over her husband's absence (ὁ δ' ἐμός γε τελέους ἑπτὰ μῆνας ἐν Πυλῳι,<sup>38</sup> 104), and, some lines later, proves herself typically bibulous (ἔατε πρώτην μ', ὦ γυναῖκες, ὀμνύναι, 207). Now barricaded on the Akropolis with the rest of the wives, Myrrhine and Kinesias act out a hilarious scene of sexual negotiation in which we are meant to envision the whole of the conjugal strike. The scene is set by *Lysistrata* herself (847–64):

Λυ.	τίς οὔτος οὐντὸς τῶν φυλάκων ἐστώς;	
Κι.		ἐγώ.
Λυ.	ἀνὴρ;	
Κι.	ἀνὴρ δῆτ'.	
Λυ.		οὐκ ἄπει δῆτ' ἐκποδών;
Κι.	σὺ δ' εἶ τίς ἡκβάλλουσά μ';	
Λυ.		ἡμεροσκόπος.
Κι.	πρὸς τῶν θεῶν νυν ἐκκάλεσόν μοι Μυρρῖνην.	
Λυ.	ἴδου καλέσω ἴγὼ Μυρρῖνην σοι; σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ;	
Κι.	ἄνηρ ἐκείνης, Παιονίδης Κινησίαιας.	

37 The diminutive ζώνιον is a rare one (elsewhere cf. Arist. *Mir.* 832b23 and *AP* 5.157) and, as Henderson 1987.76 ad 72 notes, is found only here before the fourth century B.C.E., but is “said by Harpokr. to be common in Ar. and used only of women.” The more common ζώνη, “girdle or belt,” can refer to either female or male attire, but, in poetry, it is used most frequently of the female accessory and, by extension, serves as a general index of sexuality and desirability (e.g., Homer *Od.* 5.231, 10.544; *Il.* 14.181, and *Hdt.* 1.51; cf. βαθύζωνος, used only of women). Here, I suggest, the diminutive form ζώνιον underlines the luxury and self-indulgence of Myrrhine’s wardrobe and hints at the sexual frustrations that have come with her husband’s absence. On the girdle as a symbol of erotic luxury, see Blundell 2002.156–58. On the diminutive ζώνιον and the proliferation of –ion diminutives attributed especially to articles of female decoration (so περισκελίδιον, πλόκιον, στρόφιον), see Petersen 1910.96–97.

38 “*Mine’s* been gone a full seven months in Pylos.” In the following line, the Spartan Lampito’s precise (if dialectical) echo of Myrrhine’s complaint (ὁ δ' ἐμός γα, 105) underlines the female alliance that shall develop in opposition to the male strife. On the sexual connotations of πύλος (cf. πύλη), see Henderson 1991.137.

- Λυ. ὦ χαίρε φίλτατ'· οὐ γὰρ ἀκλεῆς τοῦνομα  
τὸ σὸν παρ' ἡμῖν ἔστιν οὐδ' ἀνώνυμον.  
ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ σ' ἔχει διὰ στόμα.  
κἂν ὠὶὸν ἢ μῆλον λάβῃ, “Κινησίαι  
τουτὶ γένοιτο” φησίν.
- Κι. ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν—
- Λυ. νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην· κἂν περὶ ἀνδρῶν γ' ἐμπέσῃ  
λόγος τις, εἴρηκ' εὐθέως ἢ σὴ γυνὴ  
ὅτι ληρός ἐστι τᾶλλα πρὸς Κινησίαν.
- Κι. ἴθι νυν κάλεσον αὐτήν.  
τί οὖν; δώσεις τί μοι;
- Κι. ἔγωγέ (σοι) νῆ τὸν Δί', ἦν βούλῃ γε σὺ.  
ἔχω δὲ τοῦθ'· ὅπερ οὖν ἔχω, δίδωμί σοι.
- Λυ. φέρε νυν καλέσω καταβάσά σοι.
- Ly. Who's this we have, poking his head within our  
guardposts?
- Κι. —It's me!
- Ly. A man?
- Κι. [emphasizing his erect phallus] Damned right, a  
man!
- Ly. Well then, what say you  
make yourself damned scarce!
- Κι. And who are you to kick me out of here?
- Ly. Day-watch.
- Κι. By the gods—call out Myrrhine for me!
- Ly. Get a load of *him*! “Call out Myrrhine” for you—  
and who might *you* be, anyway?
- Κι. Her husband, Kinesias of Paionidai.
- Ly. Oh dear sir, *welcome*! Your name's hardly unknown  
to us in these parts—no stranger, you!  
Your wife always has you right on the tip of her  
tongue.  
Whether it's an egg she's after or an apple,  
it's always, “Here's to Kinesias!”
- Κι. [groaning] Oh, by the *gods*—
- My. Nay, by *Aphrodite*! And whenever the subject comes  
round

- to men, your wife speaks straightaway and says  
that next to Kinesias,<sup>39</sup> everything else is a bad joke!
- Ki. Come on then and call her out!
- Ly. Oh, now? And have you a little  
something for me?
- Ki. I've your "little something" right here, by god, if  
that's what you want [points to his crotch]. How  
about *this*? It's all I've got, and it's all yours.
- Ly. Well, then! I'll go right in and get her.

The names of the players tell part of the story. Myrrhine is itself an Attic *hetaira*-name (Pape-Benseler 1959.963), punning broadly on μύρτον, "myrtle berry," a somewhat coarse idiom for female genitalia,<sup>40</sup> and here perhaps rendered best as something like "Miss Cherry." The name Kinesias of Paionidai gets its laughs on the basis of a similarly broad sexual pun<sup>41</sup> and might be appropriately rendered "Mr. Ramcock from Shagtown." Having thus successfully convinced "her troops" of their new identities as sex negotiators for peace, *Lysistrata* pursues the *hetairization* of the wives by capitalizing further on the comic potential of these sex-trading women. For if with the first *hetairization* we were treated to the lofty male fantasy of the *Hetärensymposion*, in this scene of spousal negotiations, we have a baser, if undoubtedly more "typical," treatment of the comic *hetaira*. Thus in a deft transformation of herself from symposiarch into madam, and of the physical structure of the propylaia into a stately residence for area courtesans,

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39 On this line, Henderson 1987 notes that Aristophanes is again engaging in an onomastic joke. I would agree, but we can plumb the sexual double-talk of this line even more deeply. For as much as the phrase πρὸς Κινησίαν might carry with it the comic sense, "next to Ramcock," it must surely also provide a verbal echo of the verb προσκινήσομαι ("to move up against" as for sex, cf. Henderson 1987.96 ad 227), the precise word used during the oath (227–28) to describe the sexual action in which the wives *would not* participate: κοῦχί προσκινήσομαι.

40 Henderson 1991.134–35 suggests that μύρτον might be fittingly rendered by the slang "cunt." Lambin 1979 analyzes the sexualized pun on "myrtle" in his study of *Lys.* 632, the citation of the famed "song of Harmodios," καὶ "φορήσω τὸ ξίφος" τὸ λοιπὸν "ἐν μύρτου κλαδί" ("And from here on out, I'll carry my 'spear' in a bough of 'myrtle!'): "Μύρτος peut, en effet, recevoir également un sens obscène, comme μύρσινος et μύρτον" (548).

41 Henderson 1987 ad 852 notes that Paionidai is used here primarily for its ability to produce the pun on παίειν = βινεῖν, "fuck." See also note 52 below.

Lysistrata puts her politically motivated “creation” of the *hetaira*-wife to the test.<sup>42</sup>

The theme of sexual negotiation is evident at the outset. At first “on guard” against unwanted visitors, Lysistrata changes her mind about (and manner toward) Kinesias once she learns of his identity and that he is a “regular” of one of her girls (853–54). This recognition is followed immediately by a reference to fellatio (855) and what is likely an intentional echo of the toast offered in the traditionally sympotic game of *kottabos*.<sup>43</sup> In the following lines, however, the two dismiss with their niceties: Lysistrata makes the transaction explicit at 861; Myrrhine is introduced at 870, and her “price” is set at 900–01 (“I won’t come home unless you reach a reconciliation and stop this war!”). There is little the distraught Kinesias can do other than agree swiftly to the deal, and the remainder of the scene is an elaborate—and ultimately frustrated—comic seduction. The sexual tension builds as Myrrhine expertly heightens her “client’s” desire with protracted delays for erotic paraphernalia. Pillow talk and pandering come together on the slopes of the Akropolis in this strange conflation of marital bed and public venue, and, at verse 930, the extent of the social inversion is made explicit (929–34):

Μυ. ἀνίστασ', ἀναπήδησον. ἤδη πάντ' ἔχω.  
 Κι. ἅπαντα δῆτα. δεῦρό νυν, ὦ χρυσίον.  
 Μυ. τὸ στρόφιον ἤδη λύομαι. μέμνησό νυν·  
 μή μ' ἐξαπατήσης τὰ περὶ τῶν διαλλαγῶν.  
 Κι. νῆ Δί' ἀπολοίμην ἄρα.  
 Λυ. σισύραν οὐκ ἔχεις.  
 Κι. μὰ Δί' οὐδὲ δέομαί γ', ἀλλὰ βινεῖν βούλομαι.

My. [bringing out a pillow] Ὑρ, there, up you go.  
 That's everything, now.

42 Others have noted that the language of this scene is reminiscent of brothel negotiations. So Henderson 1987.176 ad 861–63: “[Lysistrata] treats [Kinesias] as if he were a customer in a brothel;” and Faraone 2000 remarks upon the “alternate role of Lysistrata as a courtesan and a madame.” It is similarly a characteristic of comic representations of Aspasia that she is depicted as a pimp and “keeper of whores” in Aristophanes (cf. Henry 1995.26–27), but whereas Aspasia was viewed as an instigator of war, Lysistrata here seeks to resolve the conflict.

43 Κινησῖαι τοῦτ' ἐγένοντο, “Here’s to Kinesias!” 856–57. On the red-figure “*kottabos* toast” of which these lines seem an echo, see Csapo and Miller 1991.



- Ki. Everything, indeed! Now, c'mere, Lil' Goldie!  
 My. I'm just taking off my bra . . . now, remember  
       your words,  
       and don't you try to trick me out of that reconciliation  
       you've promised.  
 Ki. Cross my heart and hope to die.  
 Ly. You don't have a blanket.  
 Ki. By god, I don't need a blanket—it's fucking I want!

The nickname Chrusion, “Lil' Goldie,” is a most unusual one to be applied to an Athenian wife—indeed, the public naming of “respectable” women was generally avoided in Old Comedy<sup>44</sup>—and appears in this sense only here in classical literature. Elsewhere in Aristophanes the nickname is used only once, in a distinctly sexual address to a pair of dancing girls (ὦ Χρυσίω, “my Goldies” at *Ach.* 1200).<sup>45</sup> *Chrus-* compounds appear occasionally, but of mortal women again only once (*chrusomêlolonthion*, “little golden beetle”) and in reference to the flute girl Dardanis at *Vesp.* 1341.<sup>46</sup> In her discussion of the discursive formation of the category of *hetaira*, Kurke argues convincingly for the explicit connection between the *hetaira* and the sympotic “language of metals” in archaic poetry.<sup>47</sup> Further, the association of the *hetaira* with gold is well established in the language and imagery of Middle Comedy; indeed, Chrusis is attested as a *hetaira* name from the fourth century on. Certainly the name appears in reference to “working girls” in Timokles, Menander, Lucian, and Plutarch,<sup>48</sup> was used as the title of a *hetaira* comedy by the fourth-century poet Antiphanes,<sup>49</sup> and remained a

44 As Noted by Zweig 1992.76; see further Schaps 1977, Sommerstein 1980b, and Davidson 1998.73, who notes: “Naming was an important part of policing women and women’s sexuality.”

45 *Ach.* 1198–1200: [Δι] ἀτταταῖ ἀτταταταῖ, / τῶν τιτθίων, ὡς σκληρὰ καὶ κυδῶνια. / φιλήσατόν με μαλθακῶς, ὦ χρυσίω.

46 *Vesp.* 1341–43; the diminutive compound χρυσομηλολόνηθιον (“little golden beetle,” as if from χρυσομηλολόνηθη) is used to address the *aulêtris* Dardanis. On the gesture of grabbing the penis “like a rope,” see the discussion below on the introduction of *Diallagê*.

47 Kurke 1997.116–17 cites Timokles fr. 27 K.-A., Menander *Samia*, and Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 8.

48 *Demetr.* 24, where Chrusis is grouped with Lamia, Demo, and Antikura as a group of “famous prostitutes” (ταῖς πορναῖς ἐκείναις) kept by Demetrius on the Akropolis.

49 K.-A. fr. 210: ἡθός τι χρυσοῦν πρὸς ἀρετὴν κεκτημένης / ὄντως ἑταίρας (“Having a golden nature with respect to her virtue, a real ‘hetaira’”); on the title of the comedy, cf. Pape-Benseler 1959.1694 s.v. Χρυσίς.

recognizably comic “prostitute’s” name even in the early Roman period.<sup>50</sup> Kurke’s discussion of the use of the name in later Greek is compelling; in the context of the present argument, I would push the discursive development of this “golden name” back in time a bit and read Aristophanes’ comic diminution of the name as evidence for definitively meretricious and (as here) potentially “hetairic” connotations even before the fourth-century developments of New Comedy.<sup>51</sup> In these lines, then, Kinesias’s use of the nickname Chrusion to refer to a wife with whom he has just agreed to trade intercourse (note the base slang βίβεῖν, “fucking,”<sup>52</sup> that follows at 934) for a political favor indicates that he has recognized, and entered into, a pseudo-hetairic exchange relationship with Myrrhine. If the somewhat lofty *Hetärensymposion* imagery of the initial oath served to draw the wives of Greece into a newly autonomous and highly idealized social and sexual role, this “bawdy brothelizing” of the second hetairization speaks more emphatically to the pragmatic aspects of the protagonist’s plan and the real reasons behind its ultimate success. In a cleverly ominous expansion of the agon’s “soldier in the marketplace” theme, we see that, in a world as out of balance as late fifth-century Athens, not even the most intimate of social interactions is safe from the intrusion of its diametric opposite.

#### IV. AN ATTRACTIVE RECONCILIATION

But if both husbands and wives have stayed true to their comic roles as assigned by the increasingly directorial Lysistrata, how are things to return to a socio-sexual norm at the resolution of the drama? For as much fun as has been the comic commingling of public and private sexual activity, peace between the Athenians and Spartans must bring with it a re-inking of the lines that have been blurred, a return to equilibrium of the social categories that have been inverted and destabilized by the war. The task is not an easy one, and, indeed, it has been noted that the drama seems to end

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50 Cf. Cicero *de Or.* II.80.327 on the *mors Chrysidis* (cf. Terence *Andria* 51); *Tusc.* IV.31.67 on the name in Trabea, a Roman comic poet of ca. 200 B.C.E.

51 Certainly these connotations are later upheld: cf. Pape-Benseler 1959.1693 s.v. Χρυσίον, where a Latinate version of the name is identified with a *meretrix* by Caecil. 6.3.

52 On the interpretation of βίβεῖν in this line, cf. Collard 1979 and *contra* Sommerstein 1980a. Henderson 1987.181 ad 934 suggests that the obscenity in these lines underlines Kinesias’s sexual frustration; indeed, it is used only here and at *Ekk.* 525 of a spouse, though the term elsewhere appears at *Av.* 763ff., *Ekk.* 228, and *Thesm.* 206 in non-marital contexts.

with a definitively sympotic (though not atypically Aristophanic) aura. But I would like to suggest that the resolution of sexual roles is effected by means of a last, somewhat brutish, sexualized transaction: *Lysistrata*'s coarse pimping of *Diallagê*, "Reconciliation," in the final lines of the play just before the corporate entry into the propylaia.<sup>53</sup> For once the Athenian and Spartan *presbeutai* have been driven by the wives' sexual negotiations to enter into their own political ones, the protagonist—encouraged by the Chorus to "try anything"—transforms the earlier hetairizations of the wives into a kind of "pornification" of the mute and highly sexualized personification of the desirable political condition itself.<sup>54</sup> Where the hetairic wives' seductions had brought the men to the bargaining table, the singularity of the individual wives' bodies would preclude even their imagined raw division. The resolution of the political debate can be located only in the body of the more isonomically accessible *pornê*-figure of *Diallagê*, thus both underlining Athenian democratic ideology and reinstating the political and social power balance firmly in the sphere of male control.

A strapping, "nude," *Diallagê* appears onstage,<sup>55</sup> and *Lysistrata* sets out to sell "her girl" to the desperately aroused Athenian and Spartan ambassadors (1108–21):

Χο.      χαῖρ' ὦ πασῶν ἀνδρειοτάτη· δεῖ δὴ νυνί σε γενέσθαι  
           δεινὴν (μαλακὴν,) ἀγαθὴν φαύλην, σεμνὴν  
           ἀγανὴν, πολύπειρον·  
           ὡς οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῆι σῆι ληφθέντες  
           ἕγγι

53 As Henderson 1987.197 ad 1114 notes, the entry of *Diallagê* provides the source for an alternate title of the drama, *Diallagai* (cf. Σ<sup>R</sup>). As an anonymous reader remarks, this scene is reminiscent of, though I would argue importantly different than, the final action of *Ekklesiastusai*.

54 I am grateful to a careful anonymous reader for the point that the representation of *Diallagê* is rather more like that of a *pornê* than a *hetaira*. See Zweig 1992.74 for a discussion of this scene in terms of modern pornography; on the pornographic "consumption" of women, see Henry 1992.

55 It has been suggested by Wilamowitz 1958 (1927).186–87 (cf. McLeish 1980.153 and Walton 1987.194) that the character of *Diallagê* was represented on stage by a nude *hetaira*. Contra this, see Reckford 1987, Vaio 1973.379, and Henderson 1987.195–96. Zweig 1992 examines Aristophanes' "mute nude female characters" from a feminist film theory perspective. Taaffe 1993.69 refers to the nude *Diallagê* as the "symbolic female" of the drama.

- συνεχώρησάν σοι καὶ κοινῆι τὰγκλήματα  
πάντ' ἐπέτρεψαν.
- Λυ. ἄλλ' οὐχὶ χαλεπὸν τοῦργον, εἰ λάβοι γέ τις  
ὀργῶντας ἀλλήλων τε μὴ ἔκπειρωμένους.  
τάχα δ' εἴσομαι ἴω. ποῦ ἴστιν ἡ Διαλλαγή;  
πρόσαγε λαβοῦσα πρῶτα τοὺς Λακωνικούς,  
καὶ μὴ χαλεπῆι τῆι χειρὶ μηδ' ἀνθαδικῆι,  
μηδ' ὥσπερ ἡμῶν ἄνδρες ἀμαθῶς τουτ' ἔδρων,  
ἀλλ' ὡς γυναικας εἰκός, οἰκείως πάνυ.  
ἦν μὴ διδῶι τὴν χεῖρα, τῆς σάθης ἄγε;  
ἴθι καὶ σὺ τούτους τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἄγε·  
οἶ δ' ἄν διδῶσι, πρόσσαγε τούτου λαβομένη.
- Chor. Greetings, most manly dame! Now is the time  
for you to become  
fearsome and mild, classy and cheap, lofty and  
lovely—a Jackie of all trades:  
for the Greek heads of state, snared by your  
charm,  
have come together and, in common, offer their  
disputes to you, as judge.
- Ly. Well, it's no grand task, if you catch them when  
they're  
feverish for an outcome and not trying each other out.  
I'll soon know: where is Diallagê? [a "nude" Diallagê  
enters]  
First off, grab the Spartans and bring them here;  
and don't manhandle them or treat them roughly  
or in utter ignorance, as our husbands treat us,  
but with a woman's touch, all domestic know-how . . .  
And if he won't give you his hand, take him by the  
prick!  
Now, go bring those Athenians, too:  
whatever they offer, you grab, and drag them over  
here.

The introduction of a personified, but mute and predominately motionless, Reconciliation offers a comic twist to the Athenian audience's familiarity with the many visual—and, in the late fourth century, predomi-

nately painted—representations of personified civic virtues. To be sure, the earliest personifications of civic attributes (e.g., Eirene, Eunomia, and Dike as the daughters of Themis) have their origins in Hesiodic poetry,<sup>56</sup> and there is evidence that many of the personifications and “genealogies” of the archaic period are adopted and advanced by poets of the early fifth century.<sup>57</sup> For the most part, however, the artistic practice of personification was both fairly rare until the latter half of the fifth century<sup>58</sup> and even then more fully developed in literary or epigraphic (thus possibly cultic), and not visual, sources.<sup>59</sup> Thus in these years, we see terms such as *dēmokratia* and *dēmos* appear for the first time as political catchphrases alluding to the foundation and growth of the Athenian democratic system, but the “representational habit” of personification does not begin to gain speed until the final decades of this century and will not reach its artistic zenith<sup>60</sup> until the Hellenistic period. In the final quarter of the fifth century, however, there is a marked rise in the frequency and variety of literary and visual personifications of idealized social and political states. There exist numerous visual examples of personifications from the Attic ware of the final decades of the fifth century,<sup>61</sup> and references to “political” personifications are not uncommon in the comedies of Aristophanes—especially in the context of a sought-after peace or other democratic ideals.<sup>62</sup>

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56 Hesiod *Th.* 901–02. Peitho is personified by Hesiod at *WD* 73 and *Th.* 349.

57 So Pindar *O.* 9.22–24 and 13.6–8. Nemesis seems to have been recognized as a goddess as early as the seventh century (cf. *Kypria* fr. 7 = Ath. 8334b); cf. further Shapiro 1993.173.

58 As early as 462, however, an inscription referring to a sanctuary of *Dēmos* and the Nymphs (IG 1.2.854) suggests a nascent personification of the democratic body even in this period.

59 Of course, even in terms of visual representations, there are some important exceptions to this trend, including, e.g., early representations of Ananke (Moscow II 1.117), Themis (Malibu 92.AE.6; Tübingen S./10 1347; Berlin F 2538 [ca. 440–30]), and Peitho (Boston 13.186).

60 With, e.g., the large-scale statues of Themis, Tykhe, Hygeia, and the literary personifications of the Archelaos relief (London BM 2191).

61 For personifications of Eunomia, cf., e.g., Budapest T 754; for Harmonia, cf., e.g., Athens NM 1629 and New York 37.11.23. For a discussion of earlier personifications on Attic red-figure ware, see Pollitt 1987; for Greek personifications in general, Shapiro 1993 and Stafford 2000.

62 Cf. Henderson 1987.195 ad 1106–27. Reconciliation is imagined as a young bride at *Ach.* 989ff.; elsewhere the poet crafts personifications of Spondai (*Eq.* 1390ff.) and Opora and Theoria (*Pax* 525; cf. 847ff.), to which compare the description of Basileia at *Av.* 1706ff. On Aristophanic personifications, Henderson cites further Newiger 1957; see, too, Zweig 1992.77.

Certainly, the *Diallagê* scene strikes a strongly democratic note. Immediately after the introduction of the figure, Lysistrata reminds the ambassadors of their shared past and underlines the Spartan role in the expulsion of the tyrants.<sup>63</sup> No mere bawdy abstraction of a favorable democratic outcome, then, the figure of *Diallagê* is rather a politically compelling means of transforming the earlier hetairizations of the citizen wives into an undiluted embodiment of an eroticized, and newly attainable, democratic impulse. For just as the hetairic negotiations of the wives were successful in breaking the men's resolve, so, too, did the "women on top" fantasy invert the power balance of gender relations in a decidedly "undemocratic" direction.<sup>64</sup> In the pornified pimping of the nude *Diallagê*—a sexual/topographical commodity<sup>65</sup> that is, above all, dividable between interested parties<sup>66</sup>—we have a distinctly democratic solution to the dispute. It both reinstates male occupation of Greek topography and, no less importantly, resolves the gender balance in terms of the vocal, discriminating, and active male and the silent, accessible, and nearly passive female.

*Nearly* passive: for as mute and—apparently—lacking in autonomy as *Diallagê* might be, she is importantly active in a way that serves only to underline her intended sexual status. For at 1119, just a few lines after her arrival, Lysistrata gives advice on persuasive technique: ἦν μὴ διδῶι τὴν χεῖρα, τῆς σάθης ἄγε, "And if he won't give you his hand, take him by the prick!" The very boldness of this command to the otherwise two-dimensional *Diallagê* is certainly meant to underline both the hilarity of the situation as a whole and the concrete way in which the young wives' negotiations have been brought to bear, if democratically redesigned, in the struggle for a sexualized return to civic order. The gesture itself—a woman's grasping a man by the penis and "dragging" him in the direction of her

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63 See esp. 1149–58 and Henderson 1987 ad loc. Taaffe 1993.71 refers to this scene in terms of a "Spartan reclothing of Greece in democratic attire."

64 For this theme in *Lysistrata* and *Bakkhai*, cf. Levine 1987. Female action as representative of male inaction (and so democratic failing) is a well-established theme of tragedy; for the specific case of comedy, see, especially, Henry 1995.21.

65 Cf.: τὸν Πύλον [1163: Pylos / D.'s anus]; τοῦτονι . . . Ἐχίνοῦντα [1168–69: Echino[u]s in Phthiotis / D.'s pubic hair]; τὸν Μηλιᾶ κόλπον τὸν ὕπισθεν [1169–70: the Melian Gulf / D.'s vagina]; τὰ Μεγαρικὰ σκέλη [1170: the walls connecting Megara to Nisaia / D.'s legs], etc.

66 So note that the pseudo-Demosthenic *Kata Neairas* (§ 47ff.) refers to a *diallagê* in which the prostitute's time is divided equally between her lovers Phrynias and Stephanos by way of offering a solution to the dispute.

desire—is a relatively uncommon one in both dramatic and artistic representations of the fifth and fourth centuries. Nevertheless, the circumstances of its occurrence are telling, as they are elsewhere restricted to identifiably sympotic contexts. Thrice (in addition to this passage) is the gesture used in Aristophanes, twice in reference to the silent “working girls” of the drinking party. The first such scene is at *Acharnians* 1216. As in *Lysistrata*, this scene occurs during the resolution of the comedy: an intoxicated Dikaiopolis reenters the action supported by two dancing girls and instructs the girls to “take hold of” his penis (ἐμοῦ δὲ γε σφὼ τοῦ πέους ἄμφω μέσου / προσλάβεσθ', ὦ φίλοι) in a lampoon of Lamachus's own request for support in the previous line. The second such scene occurs at *Vespae* 1342–45. A drunken Philokleon calls to the flute girl Dardanis: “Come here, my little golden beetle, take this ‘rope’ in your hand and hold on to it. Be careful now—it's a tad rotten—but doesn't mind a bit of rubbing.”<sup>67</sup> The Aristophanic prototypes are compelling, but the gesture is not limited to comedy: it appears at least once in the visual record, on the exterior of a black-figure *kylix* by the Thalia Painter (Berlin, Antikensammlung 3251, dated to ca. 510 B.C.E.): a working girl (her status is unclear), naked save her identifying snood, leads to the viewer's right a surprised but not unwilling symposiast by the penis. In the protagonist's directorial command, then, the poet draws on an established linguistic and visual code for sympotic posture. As silent as she may be, Diallagê's body is made to speak in a recognizably sexual idiom.

As noted above, once Diallagê has been established as a girl “up for sale,” the mute character's “topographical” body is divvied up between the men in a bawdy and strangely colonial sexualization of geographical territory. In a final conflation of social and sexual realms, the whole of Greece is refigured in terms of a single female form, and seemingly insoluble land disputes are peacefully resolved from the comic perspective of the *pornê*, “dividable” precisely because she lacks both voice and sexual or social autonomy. Once completed, the successful transaction is to be ratified within the reopened gates of the Akropolis and celebrated with what would

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67 ἀνάβαινε δεῦρο, χρυσομηλολόνηθιον. / τῆι χειρὶ τουδὶ λαβομένη τοῦ σχοινίου. / ἔχου· φυλάττου δ', ὡς σαπρὸν τὸ σχοινίον. / ὅμως γε μέντοι τριβόμενον οὐκ ἄχθεται, 1342–45. On σχοινίον, “rope,” as an indication of Philokleon's limp phallus, cf. Henderson 1991.130 (105). The final instance of this gesture occurs at *Ekkl.* 1020, in a description of an “edict” entitling mature women to sexual encounters with young men: ταῖς πρεσβυτέρας γυναιξὶν ἔστω τὸν νέον / ἔλκειν ἀνατεῖ λαβομένης τοῦ παττάλου (1019–20).

appear to be nothing so much as a type of symposion<sup>68</sup> in which it is to be imagined that the balance of gender and power is at last set right. In the end, then, the whole of the sex strike is embodied, and finally resolved, not by the clever negotiations of the hetairic wives, but rather in the mute figure of the pornified Diallagê. Because she is female, the topography of her body can be offered up as a stand-in for the male lust for political conquest. And because she is not a wife, because she is so emphatically *not even a person*, she can carry the physical brunt of the negotiations, the brutal sexual butchering of her body in terms of political land distribution, with no collateral degradation of either domestic salubriousness or gender relations. The wives—who must, after all, return at last to their status as “wives”—are insulated from any collateral social or sexual repercussions that might have accrued from actual consummation of the hetairic act; the men come together in an idealized Reconciliation that simultaneously reinforces their sexual and political autonomy. In a clever manipulation of the potential slippage between categories of wife and non-wife, of sex and politics, thus does the pornified Diallagê incite her “customers” to transfer their appetites, at least momentarily, toward a civic goal. An attractive Reconciliation, indeed.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

*Lysistrata* leaves us with many questions concerning what seems an increasingly unsteady distinction between *hetaira* and wife. Can the *hetaira* exist as a comic or pictorial construct exterior to the world of the symposion or brothel? Can the wife exist within it? Can a woman who negotiates sex outside of the confines of the domestic sphere—the wrong side of the threshold—be conceptualized in terms other than the (at least implicitly) meretricious? In the end, the garbled sexual negotiations of

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68 καλῶς λέγετε. νῦν οὖν ὅπως ἀγνεύσετε, / ὅπως ἂν αἱ γυναῖκες ὑμᾶς ἐν πόλει / ξενίσωμεν ἂν ἐν ταῖσι κίσταις εἶχομεν. / ὄρκους δ' ἐκεῖ καὶ πίστιν ἀλλήλοις δοτε, 1182–85. The Akropolis is clearly the site of this intended feast: Henderson 1987.206 ad 1184–88. Henderson 1987.204 suggests that “we are not to imagine that the men satisfy their desire on the Akropolis,” but I would contend that the final scenes of this sexual fantasy invite the audience to imagine any number of lascivious goings-on behind the closed gates of the propylaea, thus underlining both the poet’s earlier hetairization of the citizen wives as well as his final “pornified” resolution of both the war and sexual power balance.



*Lysistrata* suggest a popular conception of female sexual activity not easily differentiated even along the lines of “wife” vs. “non-wife.” Indeed, it is precisely the unstated assumption that all mature women trade sex “on some level or other” that allows the public negotiation of female sexuality to provide fertile ground for a unique—and comically forceful—discourse on civic topography and political power.

Henderson<sup>69</sup> notes that, in both comedy and in red-figure sympotic vessels, there is a certain ambiguity as to female civic and sexual status; he argues that, in the *Lysistrata*, as well as in the *Thesmophoriazousai* and *Ekklesiazousai*, Aristophanes resorts to the established character type of the comic *hetaira* in his depictions of citizen women, and, certainly, I would agree. If Aristophanes did not have at his disposal the character type of the citizen wife, as it seems he did not, it is reasonable to assume that he was inspired by the bawdy potential of the *hetaira* for his depictions of the conjugal strike. But this cannot be the whole story. For even if an extant ambiguity in the linguistic and visual code of female sexuality may have suggested to Aristophanes his comic representation of citizen wives in *hetairic* terms, the comic *hetairizations* of the *Lysistrata*, taken especially in context with the final representation of *Diallagê*, are too compelling, too intentional, too fully formed and integrated into the progression and resolution of the drama as a whole to be attributed to the absence of a dramatic prototype *alone*. It is reasonable to plead a certain naughty poetic delight in representing the “good woman” who is mistaken for a whore, but surely the poet’s careful and progressive *hetairization* of the Greek wives, as well as his final translation of citizen desire onto the body of *Diallagê*, is intended at the same time to offer a sharp commentary on the civic and domestic slippages caused by a protracted—and for the original audience, very present—war. The premise is unremarkable enough: because war is capable of dissolving the boundaries of cultural space, it is capable of dissolving the sexual and social categories through which that cultural space is determined. What is remarkable—what has, I would argue, made *Lysistrata* as irresistible a fantasy for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries C.E. as it must have been in the fifth B.C.E.—is the poet’s pointed commentary on the use of gender slippage in the construction of political power relationships. We have in *Lysistrata* the suggestion that the victims of war might turn their victimization into a temporary empowerment: that they might manipulate the very

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69 Henderson 1998, received via private correspondence.

social dissolutions by which they have been victimized in order to advance their own political agenda of peace. But even in the fantasy world of the comic stage, our drama would argue, the specter of female political action can exist only as an ephemeral oddity. For in the final resolution between sides in this conflict, the recognizably democratic return to the balance of gender and power leaves no room left for the distinctly hetairic “act” of public female action.

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